

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 MCT-01 SY-05 FAA-00 DOTE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3830

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EAIR

SUBJ: INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT SECURITY

REF: STATE 212490

1. AIRPORT TRANSIT LOUNGE ACCESSIBLE FROM MAIN LOBBY THROUGH SEPARATE OUTGOING AND INCOMING CUSTOMS AREAS. WHEN OUTGOING PASSENGERS BEING PROCESSED, INCOMING CUSTOMS AREA ACCESS SOME-TIMES UNGUARDED AND VICE VERSA. TRANSIT LOUNGE THEREFORE ACCESSIBLE. THOUGH SEVERAL POLICE GUARDS NORMALLY PRESENT AT VARIOUS CHECKPOINTS FOR OUTGOING TRAVELERS, NON-PASSENGERS (E.G. FRIENDS AND RELATIVES) HAVE EASY ACCESS TO TRANSIT LOUNGE, USUALLY BY GIVING A NOMINAL BRIBE TO GUARDS. AIRPORT GUARDS USUALLY UNARMED. A FEW CARRY SIDE ARMS. TRANSIT AREA ACCOMMODATES BOTH INCOMING, OUTGOING, AND TRANSIT PASSENGERS IN ONE ROOM WITHOUT BARRIERS TO SEPARATE CATEGORIES.

2. DEPARTING PASSENGERS AND HAND LUGGAGE RARELY CHECKED BEFORE BOARDING PLANE. ONLY AIRLINE KNOWN TO MAKE CHECK RECENTLY IS KLM WHICH USES HAND MODEL METAL DETECTOR.

3. TWO VIP LOUNGES LOCATED IN WING OF TERMINAL WITH SEPARATE ENTRANCE FROM PARKING AREA. GUARD USUALLY ON DUTY AT BUILDING ENTRANCE BUT RARELY QUESTIONS PERSONS ARRIVING IN VEHICLES BEARING DIPLOMATIC LICENSE PLATES. TRANSIT AREA EASILY ACCESSIBLE FROM VIP LOUNGES.

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4. ACCESS GATE TO TARMAC APPROXIMATELY TWO HUNDRED YARDS FROM MAIN TERMINAL. USUALLY GUARDED, THOUGH GUARD MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO ACCEPT BRIBE. GATE USUALLY REMAINS OPEN ACCORDING TO WHIM OF GUARD, WHO SOMETIMES NOT EVEN PRESENT.

5. AIRPORT SECURITY CAN ONLY BE TERMED POOR TO FAIR.

6. FYI: AIRPORT IS LOCATED ACROSS RIVER FROM CITY. TOTAL TRAVEL TIME BY ROAD AND FERRY FROM CITY CENTER TO AIRPORT APPROXIMATELY 1-1/2 HOURS. IN THE EVENT THERE WAS A TERRORIST ATTACK AT AIRPORT, SMALL NUMBER SECURITY POLICE WOULD PROBABLY BE HELPLESS PENDING DELAYED ARRIVAL REINFORCEMENTS FROM CITY.

7. THE HAGUE AND MONTREAL CONVENTIONS RATIFIED BY GOSL PARLIAMENT ON APRIL 26, 1974. THE TOKYO CONVENTION PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT AUGUST 13, 1976.

8. HAVE DISCUSSED AIRPORT SECURITY INFORMALLY WITH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND BELIEVE GOSL MIGHT BE RECEPTIVE TO FAA TEAM IF AVAILABLE. REQUEST DEPARTMENT ADVISE AVAILABILITY OF TEAM AND ANY ADDITIONAL PARTICULARS NEED FROM POST.
NORTH

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